

ELF NOTES

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DESIGNS OF NATURE CAMOUFLAGE

NIGHT WATCH

It is easiest for people to be camouflaged under the cover of night. This makes nighttime a good time to catch a glimpse of some more secretive creatures. By day select a tree limb that is accessible by climbing (or by ladder) that is comfortable to sit on. Or set up a hammock to sit in. A place near the edge of woods and field is best. Before you go out to watch, dress in dark-colored clothing and cover a flashlight or headlamp with red cellophane. At dusk, take the flashlight and go quietly to your watching spot. Get as comfortable and quiet as possible then just wait and watch. Animals smell the air at nose level; since air near the ground tends to rise, sitting above the ground decreases the possibility that you will be detected by scent. Most nocturnal animals do not respond to the red spectrum, the red light allows you to see without being seen.

Many creatures are shaped or colored to blend into their surroundings. These different designs of camouflage are critical to the survival of those animals.

Camouflage is a protective coloration or disguise. Some of the different types of camouflage in nature are: matching color or shape, disruptive coloration, countershading, masking, mimicry, and warning coloration.

Camouflage that contributes to disguise is most effective when an animal can remain perfectly still and its shape, color, and texture blend in with the surroundings. Animals' coloration and patterns that are very noticeable are protective in that they serve as a warning to keep others away.

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